

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 CEA-01 STR-07 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03
TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
ACDA-12 IO-13 /146 W
-----044711 251925Z /45

R 250738Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 782
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1398

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PORG, MASS, EQUIP, MA, UR
SUBJ: RATSIRAKA ACQUIRES VIP AIRCRAFT AND TRACTORS FROM USSR

REF: A) CERP 0002; B) 77 ANT 1508; C) ANT 1291; D) MAPUTO 0916

1. IN HIS ARRIVAL REMARKS AT AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN FROM
OAU (REPORTED SEPTTEL) PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA REVEALED THAT
THE SOVIET UNION WAS GIVING MADAGASCAR A YAK 40 "FOR
PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL" AND 200 TRACTORS AS GIFTS AND WOULD
SELL MADAGASCAR 1,000 MORE TRACTORS AT 1/2 THE PRICE
OF WESTERN EQUIVALENTS. HE ALSO REVEALED THAT ALGERIA
WOULD GIVE MADAGASCAR 100 TRACTORS AND PLOWS. COMMENT:
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POSSIBILITY OF ACQUISITION OF YAK 40 AND OTHER SOVIET
AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN AROUND A LONG TIME (REF B).

2. RATSIRAKA ACCOMPANIED THESE REVELATIONS BY SAYING
THAT WESTERN AID WAS OFTEN CONDITIONAL WHICH WAS NOT THE
CASE WITH AID FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES.

3. ACCORDING TO SOVIET CHARGE POPKIN, RATSIRAKA HAD ACCEPTED THE SOVIET OFFER OF TRACTORS ONLY CONDITIONALLY WHILE IN MOSCOW AS HE SAID HE HAD TO CONSULT HIS GOVERNMENT. ANOTHER SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION IN MOSCOW, ACCORDING SAME SOURCE, WAS THE PLANNED SOVIET CONSTRUCTION OF A CEMENT PLANT IN NORTH OF COUNTRY (REF C).

4. COMMENT: THERE IS NO INDICATION YET AS TO DIMENSIONS OF ARMS PURCHASES WHICH WERE ARRANGED IN MOSCOW. IF THEY ARE NO MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OBTAINED, THEY MUST BE QUITE LIMITED. THE MODEST RESULT SO FAR KNOWN OF RATSIRAKA'S SOVIET VISIT STAND IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT HE GAVE THE USSR AT KHARTOUM. THIS CAN MOST READILY BE EXPLAINED IN ONE OF TWO WAYS OR A COMBINATION OF BOTH. RATSIRAKA IS SPEAKING FROM GENUINE CONVICTION AND/OR THE SOVIETS HAVE OBTAINED HIS SUPPORT CHEAP. A THIRD THEORY CAN BE ADVANCED, WHICH IS BOTH MORE CONVOLUTED AND MORE COMFORTING. HAVING AGAIN REFUSED THE SOVIET REQUEST FOR BASE RIGHTS IN MADAGASCAR (REF D), RATSIRAKA DECIDED TO GIVE RHETORICAL COMPENSATION TO THE USSR. BARRETT

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